

## ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines: development, implementation and dissemination

### introduction

Clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) are defined as ‘systemically developed statements to assist practitioner and patient decisions about appropriate health care for specific clinical circumstances’.

The main purposes of GPGs are: (i) to improve the quality of patient care and health care outcomes; (ii) to make clinical decisions more transparent; (iii) to promote efficient use of resources; (iv) to provide guidance for involved stakeholders (health professionals, patients, industry, health care providers and policies makers); (v) to support quality control.

The original idea for the creation of the ESMO CPGs came in 1998 and in 1999 the ESMO Guidelines Task Force was constituted. The structure of the ESMO Guidelines Working Group consists of an Editorial Board (four members), of 10

subject editors responsible for each tumour site, of ~100 authors and co-authors as well as of 150 reviewers, five for each guideline.

### development of ESMO CPGs

ESMO CPGs are produced through a narrative literature search and are based on a multidisciplinary approach. All members of the ESMO Guidelines Working Group (editors, subject editors, authors, reviewers) are participating in the development process. Table 1 demonstrates the ESMO Guidelines development process.

In addition, during the last couple of years several ESMO CPGs have been produced through consensus conferences or meetings sponsored by ESMO or in collaboration with other scientific bodies. Similar activities are planned for the years 2010 and 2011 (Table 2).

In total, ESMO have published 54 CPGs covering almost all tumour types as well as various other topics, i.e. therapeutic use of growth factors or anti-emetics or management of paraneoplastic syndromes.

### implementation of ESMO CPGs

ESMO CPGs are properly and effectively implemented and are adequately incorporated into routine clinical practice. This implementation facilitates knowledge uptake and leads to better patient-focused care.

The targeted health professionals for ESMO CPGs are mainly medical oncologists. ESMO CPGs are annually published in the *Annals of Oncology* and they are also available on the ESMO Website. The numbers of downloads from the Oxford Journals usage statistics extracted data for the period May 2007–September 2009 showed an exponential increase. The last estimation for the 5 months between May 2009 and September 2009 was 89 604 hits, i.e. almost double compared with the previous 6 months.

**Table 1.** ESMO Guidelines development process

ESMO GLWG	Selects topics
Subject editors (SEs)	Invite authors
Authors	Send manuscript to SEs
Subject editors	Select reviewers
Reviewers	Return manuscript to SEs
Subject editors	Send manuscript to Editors for first ‘make decision’ process
Editors	Return manuscript to SEs
Subject editors	Notify authors
Authors	Accept final comments
Subject editors	Send manuscript to Editor for final approval
Editors	Make final decision

**Table 2.** Consensus meeting-derived ESMO CPGs

Date	Event	Venue	Funded by
October 2007	Soft tissue sarcomas and GIST	Lugano, Switzerland	Conticanet
May 2008	Testicular cancer	Munich, Germany	ESMO (EIS)
May 2009	Communication skills	Kappel am Albis, Switzerland	Swiss Cancer League
June 2009	Anti-emetics	Perugia, Italy	MASCC/ESMO
November 2009	Sarcomas (STS)	Lugano, Switzerland	Conticanet
November 2009	Sarcomas (bone)	Lugano, Switzerland	Eurobonet
May 2010	Lung cancer	Lugano, Switzerland	ESMO, San Salvatore Foundation
September 2010	Colorectal	Barcelona, Spain	ESMO
February 2011	Head and neck cancer	Barcelona, Spain	ESMO–ESTRO–EHNS

Also, a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions assessing the attitude of oncologists relating to ESMO CPGs was distributed to the participants of ESMO Congresses and of Education Conferences – Lugano (ECLU). From the analysis of the questionnaire it was encouraging to find that ESMO CPGs have been successfully recognized by European and non-European oncologists.

## dissemination of ESMO CPGs

During the last several years ESMO CPGs have been disseminated various different ways such as.

- (i) The interactive ESMO Guideline session conducting during the ESMO Congresses with case presentation and discussion by using the ESMO CPGs. Each session is evaluated through electronic vote. Up to now, ESMO has organized six interactive sessions, where the average score has been increased from 3.78 to 4.48.
- (ii) The translation of ESMO CPGs to other languages. So far, ESMO guidelines have been translated into 13 different languages.
- (iii) The presentation of ESMO CPGs at international and national congresses, conferences, symposia and workshops.

- (iv) The publication of related articles or editorials in scientific journals or newsletters.

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## literature

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